



Working on the inside...
Succeeding on the outside

Montana Correctional Enterprises (MCE) Advisory Council Minutes

350 Conley Lake Rd. – Deer Lodge, MT 59722
November 27 & 28, 2007

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Senator Kim Gillan, Dr. David Yarlott, Peggy Grimes, Gerald Bender, Cheryl Moore-Gough, Mike Monforton and Brian Sheridan

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS (DOC) MEMBERS PRESENT: Gayle Lambert, MCE Administrator; Director Mike Ferriter, Communications Director Bob Anez, Warden Mahoney, Deputy Warden Swanson, Andrew Olcott, Fiscal Director; Bill Dabney, Ranch Director, Larry Burke, Vocational Education Director; Johnal Holst, Industries Director; Joe Mihelic, Food Factory Director; and Gail Boese, MCE Administrative Officer

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT: Representative Mike Jopek and Larry Mayo

November 27, 2007 – 1:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

After introductions, the MCE Advisory Council was called to order by Senator Kim Gillan.

Senator Gillan thanked everyone for attending and informed the Council that it has always been a privilege to know and work with Administrator Gayle Lambert. Senator Gillan stated that Gayle has been instrumental in the growth and success of the Montana Correctional Enterprises (MCE) division.

Senator Gillan also stated that the success of MCE also comes with many challenges. The Governor therefore, appointed MCE Council members, based on expertise in their field, for a two year term beginning October 17, 2007 and ending October 17, 2009. As the Council members learn about MCE, it is hoped that they will be able to provide advice and guidance to MCE in its efforts to improve existing programs and add additional programs to increase training, education and re-entry opportunities.

Director Ferriter

Senator Gillan introduced DOC Director Mike Ferriter. Director Ferriter thanked everyone for coming and emphasized that DOC is larger than most people realize with a substantial budget of \$171 million. With a juvenile and adult population of nearly 13,200, MCE's role and contributions is crucial to the State of Montana in being able to offer inmates job opportunities that teach inmates pride in themselves and a strong work ethic. Director Ferriter stated that the biggest hurdle for inmates is substance abuse and employment. MCE is challenged with providing inmates job opportunities

while finding that fine balance with the private business sector and keeping their operation self-supporting and viable.

Director Ferriter explained the Mission of the Department of Corrections which is: public and staff safety, to promote positive change and reintegrate offenders into the community, and support victims of crime.

As outlined in the Executive Order, the Council member's duties and purpose will be to guide and give input to MCE as well as report results and recommendations to the Governor regarding:

1. current MCE programs;
2. development of new programs; and
3. future infrastructure needs.

Gayle Lambert

Senator Gillan turned the meeting over to Gayle Lambert. Administrator Lambert brought the council's attention to the MCE organizational chart. She stated that although each program within MCE is unique, they all have the same mission, which correlates with the DOC Mission. One addition is *providing employment and training opportunities to offenders*. She emphasized that MCE's most important product is the *inmate returned to society*. Approximately 80% of eligible inmates are working.

Administrator Lambert explained that MCE's funding is 83% proprietary funds which means that most of our programs are self-supporting. Other funding sources are the General Fund and state special revenue.

Council member Sheridan asked if MCE has completed any comparison studies on work programs with other states. Administrator Lambert stated that MCE is a member of the National Correctional Industries Association (NCIA). NCIA supports correctional industries through federal legislation, annual training conferences, workshops and websites, and informative publications. NCIA keeps the field abreast of emerging technology, sales and marketing techniques, re-entry strategies, the legislative climate, and many success stories experienced by other states. The NCIA directory lists every program that is available in each state along with contact information.

Administrator Lambert gave a brief history of the Ranch Advisory Committee that existed up to about a year and one-half ago to make way for the new MCE Advisory Council. Some of the original committee members were former legislator Bill Tash and Tom Beck, and former members Francis Bardanouve, Francis Koenke, Robert Thoft, Ed Grady, Don Davis, and Ray Lybeck. Later members were Senator Gerald Pease and former Budget Director Swysgood and former legislators Allen Rome and Sherman Anderson.

Council member Cheryl Moore-Gough asked about work opportunities for inmates at the regional prisons. Administrator Lambert stated that unfortunately, other than programs at the Women's Prison; there are no training opportunities available at the regional facilities through MCE. This is something that MCE is continually striving towards and she is hopeful that together we can come up with some ideas. There are many limitations at some of the facilities and again, we must also be aware of the private business sector and whether the program can be self-sustaining.

The Council spent the rest of the day touring the Food Bank, Lumber Processing, the Dairy, Ranch and Conley Lake.

Senator Gillan requested public comments. There were no public comments at the end of day one. The meeting recessed at approximately 5:30 p.m.

November 28, 2007 – 8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 a.m. by Senator Kim Gillan.

The tour continued with the members visiting the Food Factory, Canteen, Vocational Education, License Plate Factory and Industries.

The business meeting reconvened at noon with a working lunch and a short video of the high side vocational education, laundry and the Training Offenders for Transition (TOT) program.

Administrator Lambert introduced Warden Mahoney and Deputy Warden Swanson. Montana State Prison is a separate division under the Department of Corrections, as is MCE, reporting directly to DOC Director Ferriter. Although they are separate entities, they work together to provide safety and security to staff, inmates and the community. In the work area, MCE staff is security for the prison.

Warden Mahoney stated that the prison is seeing a trend toward an aging population and inmates with fewer skills. MSP also offers job opportunities in education, food service, infirmary aides, housing unit workers, and maintenance.

Warden Mahoney answered a question about what the prison does with the money that is funded from the Legislature. Warden Mahoney stated that some of the prison programs that have resulted due to additional funding by the Legislature are: Warm Springs Addictions Treatment and Change Program (WATCH); Sanction, Treatment, Assessment, Revocation and Transition Center (START); and Missoula Assessment and Sanction Center (MASC). Also the Legislature funded additional staff including correctional officers, facility additions and improvements, additional sex offender and chemical dependency treatment units, and a re-entry program.

Deputy Warden Swanson stated that he cannot over-estimate the benefits of MCE programs and inmates working. Having inmates work is a tool to managing inmate population and the skills they learn and work ethic is important to reducing recidivism rates and the safety of our communities.

Warden Mahoney discussed the barriers in releasing inmates.

Classification Officer Roxanne Wigert gave a presentation on inmate classification to clarify how inmates are allowed to work and their placement within the prison.

The Council discussed their role in carrying out the Governor's Executive Order. The committee wanted to know what would be beneficial to MCE. The most important area seemed to be more training and work opportunities at the regional prisons. MCE is willing to look at all programs and ideas for the private prison in Shelby and the regional prisons in Glendive and Great Falls.

Possible agenda items for the next meeting scheduled for March 26, 2008 in Billings, Montana are:

1. Presentation on private and regional prisons.
2. Comparison of work programs in other states (NCIA).
3. Presentation from a representative in Community Corrections. (Pam Bunke)
4. Tour of Montana Women's Prison (MWP).

Senator Gillan offered a tour of the Montana State University-Billings campus if time permits.

Council members were encouraged to send agenda items for the next meeting to Gail Boese, MCE Administrative Officer at gboese@mt.gov. Members were also encouraged to stop downtown on Main Street to visit the Hobby Store, which sells inmate produced horsehair and leather crafts.

Senator Gillan requested public comments. There were no public comments.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:00 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Gail Boese, Administrative Officer